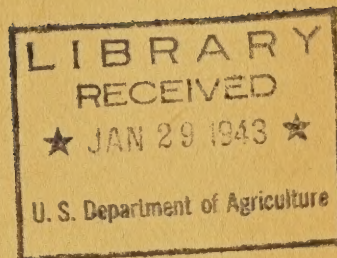


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FARM LABOR NOTES

August 20, 1942



Extracts from reports of field representatives

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Sources indicated by initials

BAE	Bureau of Agricultural Economics
FLC	Farm Labor Committee
RLSC	Regional Labor Supply Committee
FSA	Farm Security Administration
WB	War Board
OI	Office of Information
USES	United States Employment Service
ES	Extension Service, USDA







## NORTHEAST REGION

Dairy farms are among those hardest hit by the shrunken labor supply, both because their labor needs are more nearly constant through the year, and because the nature of the tasks involved makes it harder to train inexperienced help.

In every State in the Northeast Region farm machinery is being used more than ever and many farms would make still greater use of machinery if it could be obtained. Responsibilities in the home and on the farm have been shuffled so that women and younger family members are taking on a considerable share of the work generally done by men. (BAE)

### MAINE:

Plans for housing of laborers are being developed in a few localities, especially with reference to the canning industry. Two Boy Scout labor camps are to be established to supply the labor needed to harvest beans in Penobscot and Somerset Counties. One canning company has located tents at a pea vining plant and is to supply laborers with board and housing facilities. (WB)

In some districts the farm placement representatives are doing excellent work but there are many offices in which the degree of activity in farm labor work is disappointing. (WB)

### VERMONT:

Reports from officers of the Volunteer Land Corps show that there are between 500 and 600 recruits of the Volunteer Land Corps working on farms throughout the nine southern counties of the State. Farmers who have employed these boys and girls state that they are willing to work and to learn, and make good help for the jobs they are qualified to do around dairy farms.

The commercial apple growers are beginning to ask about labor for the apple harvest. It is hoped that a supply of apple pickers can be obtained through the local high schools, and from nearby cities.

The most serious farm labor shortage is that of regular farm help on dairy farms. In some areas, it is nearly impossible to hire year round help, capable of doing dairy farm work. Due to this shortage, production of dairy products may decline in 1943 and 1944. (WB)

### MASSACHUSETTS:

Hampshire County - The International Student Service is operating a work camp for college girls at Mount Holyoke College and about 15 of these girls have already been placed on nearby farms.



Franklin County - The farm labor situation, with the exception of dairy farm help, has not been as serious as anticipated. (WB)

#### RHODE ISLAND:

The USES is continuing to place laborers on farms but cannot supply all the orders which they receive. Market gardeners are using school youth that has been recruited in cooperation with the school authorities. (WB)

#### CONNECTICUT:

The University, in cooperation with the Connecticut Land Army and the Extension Service, is giving women a two weeks free course in practical farming. This course includes harnessing and driving a team of horses, tractor driving, caring for poultry, cows and other livestock, and routine milk processing tasks. (ES)

A CCC camp near Somers, Tolland County, has been converted into a FSA migratory workers camp. (FSA)

#### NEW YORK:

The three most difficult problems affecting the farm labor supply of New York are: housing for migratory workers, transportation for workers, and encouraging farmers to register with the USES. (WB)

Labor camps are being established by FSA in the Genesee-Orleans area and in Niagara, Erie and Wayne counties. These should materially help in the harvest of tomatoes, apples and other late crops in western New York. There have been a few reports of crops not being completely harvested because of the shortage of labor and high wages. The labor supply seemed ample for the potato harvest on the Island. (BAE)

#### NEW JERSEY:

Supply of workers - Experienced workers in family groups, principally Italian and colored, have in the past handled most of the seasonal fruit and vegetable work. The supply of Italian workers has been declining for several years and is almost non-existent this year. Colored family groups who usually migrate from the South under the leadership of a labor contractor are appearing in smaller numbers this year. To make up the difference, there has been a considerable shift toward employment of local school youth and migrant single males, many of whom are not experienced in harvesting fruit and vegetables. The supply of this type of labor has been more than adequate to take care of total requirements. Inconvenience



and other difficulties encountered in shifting to a changed labor supply appears to be the foundation of most all New Jersey farm labor problems. There is friction in farmer-agency and inter-agency relationships associated with adapting to wartime conditions. Nevertheless, farm production this year does not appear to be in real hazard because of labor shortage.

In the northern metropolitan truck garden area (Passaic and Bergen Counties), growers have met their labor needs through successful employment of high school youth. The north central potato area has been able to procure a sufficient number of colored workers from the South, largely because these growers maintain their own contacts with southern worker groups.

The greatest difficulties have developed in the central fruit and vegetable area (Burlington and Gloucester Counties). This area has been less successful in adapting to wartime conditions through employment of school youth and inexperienced workers. The FSA camps at Swedesboro and Burlington are only partially occupied, and the few occupants do not keep fully employed. South Jersey (Cumberland and Salem Counties) has evidently been able to make very satisfactory arrangements. Colored family workers from the South have been recruited, and the Bridgeton FSA camp appears to be operating very smoothly as the center of labor supply.

Recruitment of labor - Recruitment has been undertaken by the USES and by private groups and individuals. Private recruitment seems to have been fairly successful, but the Employment Service program has been a failure. Recently, growers' groups advanced several hundred dollars to transport a group of workers from Atlanta, Georgia. These workers were to be recruited by the Georgia Employment Service, and growers requested experienced family workers. But through a misunderstanding, colored boys between 16 and 20 were supplied. Growers were disappointed because this was not the type of workers requested; the boys were disappointed because the work and living conditions had been misunderstood at Atlanta. Arrangements have now been completed to return this group of boys to their homes.

Employment Service also recruited labor in Philadelphia and New York. Colored boys were being recruited from Philadelphia during the latter week in July but upon arrival at the Burlington FSA camp were informed by the Employment Service personnel that farmers were not hiring inexperienced boys and that they had better go right back to Philadelphia. An understanding on this situation was not cleared between Philadelphia and New Jersey, and recruits continued to pour into the latter State for farm work, only to be sent back home.

Recruitment and placement of high school youth on farms near their homes have been handled largely through vocational agriculture teachers and the State Commission on Student Service.

Adjustments to the wartime labor situation - On the whole, there remains a marked tendency among growers to resist adjustments and to demand that the usual type of laborer be provided.



Perhaps the greatest obstruction in making the adaptation to a wartime labor supply is the growers' reluctance to provide adequate friendly supervision. Growers are accustomed to turning the job over to a labor contractor, padrone, or row boss. Consequently, they tend to find it somewhat irksome to have to show inexperienced workers how to go about properly picking peaches, tomatoes, or other crops.

Other obstructions in adapting to a changed labor supply are housing and transportation. (BAE)

Three FSA migratory camps, all of the nobile type, were in operation in New Jersey on July 11. These housed 279 families, consisting of 337 individuals. (FSA)



## NORTH CENTRAL REGION

There has been the usual worry about labor for the harvest season, particularly corn and small grain harvest. Programs for the exchange of labor and machinery are well organized and little loss of crops, due to labor shortages, has been experienced.

In some districts in this area, as around Cairo, Illinois, there is said to be an over supply of available labor. Migrants are coming from Missouri, Arkansas and Michigan. They are making contact in the Illinois fruit area. A surplus of farm labor has also been reported in four areas in Iowa. (FSA)

### OHIO:

The supply of farm labor is insufficient to meet the demand and there is no available farm help in nearby towns and villages because of the many war industries. Farmers cannot meet the wages paid by industry. In early September, during the harvest of onions, potatoes, and apples, there will be a need for migratory workers. (BAE)

The USES and the WPA have been filling the demands for special agricultural workers quite satisfactorily. In addition to their regular registered lists of workers, they have established a camp in Ottawa County for college students. (WB)

### INDIANA:

The labor situation is not alarming at the present time. Farmers have been able to do all of their necessary work without loss due to labor shortage. This has meant a separation of the jobs to be done into the "must" jobs and those that can go undone, if necessary. Tomato canners have been able to sign up all of the tomato peelers they will need. (BAE)

### ILLINOIS:

The USES offices are continuing in their efforts to supply farms needing seasonal labor. In most areas they have recruited ample help for such operations as corn detasseling, harvesting of sweet corn and fruit. In a few areas, such as the Chicago milkshed where many farm laborers have been recruited into industrial work, the situation is becoming serious. Occasionally, dairy farmers have had to sell their cows because labor was unavailable. From surveys made by the USES and AAA, it would appear that there is not going to be any general shortage of farm labor in Illinois this year. (WB)

### MICHIGAN:

Michigan growers have harvested their cherry crop successfully, securing their labor mainly on the basis of an appeal to patriotism. No improvement in sanitary or living conditions has been made over those existing last year. (FSA)



IOWA:

Iowa farmers have pulled through the period of peak labor requirements of July with little apparent loss of potential production. Some hay was possibly left in the fields, some corn may not have been as efficiently cultivated as it would have been with experienced help and some small grain loss may have occurred because of lack of help, but the high level of production of both livestock and crops indicate that the job has been done. (BAE)

WISCONSIN:

A program, whereby unemployed rural residents in the burnt-over area might secure employment in areas of labor need is being considered. (FSA)

There is a decrease in the available farm labor supply, and an increase in the demand for farm labor. There has been a slight increase in registrations, during the past month, of female applicants. Registration of male applicants has fallen off. There are on file orders for 800 farm hands for the dairy industry, and the USES is having difficulty in trying to fill these. (RLSC)

No migrant labor is used in Door County, the cherry orchard section of northeast Wisconsin. Most of the pickers are children secured through the employment stations of the larger cities. The "vacation" without cost angle is stressed in recruiting children. The camps are equal to those of the bigger youth organizations. Some of the larger orchards even hire athletic directors to work as foremen in the daytime, supervising recreation, evenings and over the weekend. (FSA)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No serious loss of crops has been reported due to labor shortage. The danger of rotting of unshocked small grain exists, and in the western part of the State, it is estimated that only half of the available wild hay can be harvested, because of the shortage of labor. Migrant workers from as far south as Louisiana were noted in the State, but some of them did not accept work because of the low wages offered.

There is evidence that both the farmers and laborers are making greater use of the USES. The volunteer representative system now in its second year of service is very effective. (BAE)

Urban pools are well organized and surveys show that South Dakota should be able to handle its small grain harvest. (FSA)



## NEBRASKA:

No crop loss was reported in the small grain harvest, due to the general efforts of Chambers of Commerce, civic clubs, business men and town workers. The volunteer representative system of farm placement being used by the USES for the first year in Nebraska is apparently working very well. Several of the volunteer representatives are expending considerable effort in placing workers. Labor pools formed in towns and cities provided an ample labor supply for detasseling corn for hybrid seed production. (BAE)

Over 300 workers reported to the Nebraska USES on the basis of referrals from the Kansas branch of the Service. There has also been a considerable movement of migrants from the south into and through Nebraska. (FSA)

At the present time (July 14) the grain harvest in Nebraska is approximately one-half finished and up to this time no reports have been received which indicate that there will be an acute shortage of labor this summer. In the localized areas where shortages are apparent the county War Board agencies and the U. S. Employment Service representatives are confident that they will be able to supply the necessary labor.

From the areas surrounding the larger towns and cities reports have been received that dairymen are having considerable difficulty in obtaining competent help; however, there have been no reports which would indicate that dairy herds have had to be sold for meat purposes. There have been a few sales of dairy herds due to the labor shortage but in each of these cases there was a good demand for the cows by the farmers in the area. (WB)

## NORTH DAKOTA:

The harvesting of wild hay was nearly completed over the State in July. No critical labor shortages were reported. The demand for farm labor in the near future, when the harvesting of grain will be general in the State, is expected to be very large.

The local farm labor pools formed or started on registration day (June 29) have been very useful in the counties where harvest is under way. (BAE)

Late in July the State USES issued a very pessimistic report, claiming a State need of thousands of migrants. Stress was laid on the constant migration out of the State which has been going on for several years and which has been intensified by war work in nearby States. Urban mobilization has been under way for some time, but the State USES felt that it would not completely compensate for the decrease in migration into the State.

It has been reported that the labor situation is more acute in this State than in nearby States, but that it can be met with proper organizations. A survey showed that the degree of organization necessary for success has not been obtained in all sections of the State at the end of July. (FSA)



KANSAS:

It was necessary to make use of all available farm labor, including exchange of local labor, town boys and older men, labor saving devices, and longer hours, to complete the wheat harvest. The lack of labor at wheat harvest time curtailed considerable of the usual plowing and discing. A continued shortage of dairy hands is reported, particularly in areas adjacent to war industry plants.

Dairy farmers are having difficulty in getting experienced farm labor and many herds are being sold or reduced in size. Except for dairy farms the supply of farm labor seems adequate. (BAE)

Kansas anticipates a shortage of labor for the broomcorn harvest. It is possible, with careful planning for the increased use of exchange labor, that the situation can be handled. (FSA)

MISSOURI:

Farmers are exchanging work more than in previous years, lending machinery or doing custom work. More women and children are working in the fields. The plan of recruiting townspeople to help in emergencies is expanding. Missouri Pacific employees at Sedalia have helped with farm work after their regular hours.

The Voluntary placement plan, is in effect in some 30 counties with over 300 volunteers. (BAE)



## SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION

Thousands of negroes are stranded in the Carolinas because of lack of transportation, according to reports from those reaching the Eastern Shore. Workers leaving Maryland still lack proper guidance. Leaflets have been scattered among workers resident in FSA camps in Maryland advertising higher wages and inducing migrants to come to New Jersey. Migrants en-route to Maryland have been diverted to other States at points on the Virginia mainland and at Cape Charles, despite instructions from their home State USES offices to proceed to Maryland. Concern was expressed that next fall might see a severe decrease in the usual migration of labor into Florida from Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina, because of the many local construction projects in these States. A drive to unionize the workers in Florida is expected; the packing houses are now fully organized. Florida growers pledged themselves to work with the USES on an arrangement, whereby Alabama and Georgia workers would be transported to Florida after the peanut and cotton crop were harvested. Growers also pledged themselves to make an accurate, uninflated survey of future labor needs. (FSA)

### DELAWARE:

A Farm Security Administration migratory workers' camp was in operation in Delaware, near Dover, during the month of July, occupancy beginning even before construction was completed. This has considerably eased the labor situation. Farmers desire this camp to remain the year around, instead of having it moved South during the winter. (FSA)

### MARYLAND:

The fields appear to be as well cultivated as in past years and there is no visible loss of crops because of labor shortages. Some tomatoes may be lost, due to a shortage of pickers at the peak period which will occur about the last two weeks of August.

The four transient labor camps on the Eastern Shore are only a partial success. The camps are only about 25 percent filled, with practically no supervision over the movement of the occupants, all of whom are colored.

County Commissioners in several counties on the Eastern Shore have appropriated funds to bring in transient labor. These funds are to be equalled by State funds but there is a lack of coordination in administering the money and recruiting and transporting the so-called transient worker. (BAE)

Four FSA migratory workers' camps, all of the mobile type, were in operation on July 11. These housed 328 families, comprising 719 individuals. (FSA)



#### VIRGINIA:

The number of farm workers both family and hired seems to be about the same as a year ago. Workers are scarce but the work is getting done, by using a larger proportion of boys and women in the fields. General farmers are helping each other to a larger extent than usual.

One canner stated he had doubled wages and was continuing to increase them but was losing help every day. He usually runs two crews in his canning plant but this year has only one. (BAE)

Threemobile migratory workers' camps were in Virginia on July 11. They housed 71 families totalling 109 individuals. (FSA)

#### WEST VIRGINIA:

Regular hired farm labor has been scarce but crops have not suffered to any great extent because of labor shortages. It now appears that sufficient help has been recruited to take care of the fall fruit harvest. This has been the major farm labor problem of the State. (BAE)

#### NORTH CAROLINA:

There has been no serious crop loss from lack of labor. (BAE)

Famlico County reports that it completed its potato harvest in less time and with fewer laborers than in any previous year. This increased efficiency is credited, among other factors, to centralized assignment from the FSA camp at Bay Boro. The FSA migratory labor camp at Hendersonville has been so successful that growers in the area privately raised the amount necessary to double the capacity of the camp. (FSA)

#### SOUTH CAROLINA:

The peak labor demand will be for cotton pickers in September. No real labor shortage is anticipated. (BAE)

An incident illustrating one aspect of labor hoarding has been reported from South Carolina. The Sandhills peach area lies largely in North Carolina but extends a short distance into South Carolina. The managers of the two adjacent USES offices, one in North Carolina and the other in South Carolina, had made an agreement for the transfer of the workers as needed. Acting under this agreement, the North Carolina manager sent a truck to South Carolina to pick up a load of workers. The truck had many North Carolina Negroes on board when it entered South Carolina. As soon as the driver began to pick up South Carolina Negroes, and long before these numbered anything like the number of North Carolina Negroes on board, the truck driver was arrested and held under \$2,000 bond as a violator of the labor recruiting law. The driver was still being held in jail at the end of July although the truck had been released to its owner after several days delay. During the earlier part of the season such exchange of labor had been unimpeded. The workers were not needed in the South Carolina locality at the time of the incident. (FSA)



GEORGIA:

The labor supply has been adequate through July. A general labor shortage is expected in the Coastal Plains area in September, due to the fact that it is the month of peak labor requirements for both cotton and peanuts. (BAE)

FLORIDA:

Farm employers in Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties are taking aggressive action toward the importation of negro labroers from Nassau for the purpose of harvesting the crops. It is the consensus of opinion that such action should not be encouraged until it is clearly demonstrated that farm employers have exhausted every other labor source. (RLSC)

Jackson and adjoining counties are anticipating labor shortages in September during the peak cotton and peanut harvest. The USES expects to meet these shortages by recruiting negro laborers from the northeastern part of the State. (BAE)

Five FSA year-round labor camps were in operation in July, housing 403 families. (FSA)

St. Lucie - The outlook is for serious shortage of help next fall for vegetable production and harvest as well as citrus harvest. An attempt is being made to secure importation of negro labor from Nassau.

Santa Rosa - Within sixty days there will be a big shortage in farm labor, especially in harvesting of peanuts and unless some arrangements are made to take care of this shortage many of the peanuts will not be harvested.

Osceola - Cattlemen need additional labor. The USES and WPA cannot supply men for this work. (WB)



SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

There is a definite shortage in the farm labor supply in the war industry areas. Due to adjustments being made by farmers, the effects of this shortage on crop production have not been critical.

Several counties in Mississippi anticipate difficulty in securing sufficient cotton pickers, but it is thought, if wages are increased and all available labor is utilized, no major difficulties will be experienced. Failure to obtain promised peanut harvesting machines is causing worry among farmers in Alabama. Misleading newspaper stories regarding potato prices have concerned farmers much more than any fears of labor shortage. With an increase in rice acreage and a large war construction project being completed in one of the major rice counties, Arkansas anticipates no crop loss, due to labor shortage. (FSA)

As the wheat harvest rolls north from the plains of Texas, storage remains the pressing problem. Wheat has piled high on the ground of the panhandle of Texas and northwestern Oklahoma. Yields are good and the actual harvest is proceeding smoothly. Labor shortages have shown only in spots and in almost every case have been alleviated in short order.

One of the most inspiring things that appears in the wheat picture is the manner in which the farmers are answering the W.B. call for machinery to move with the harvest. The way they have realized the plight of their neighbors and come to their assistance with machinery is certainly an inspiration to those working on the FOOD FOR FREEDOM program. (OI)

KENTUCKY:

The USES reports that they have filled all requests for farm labor in Clark County. There have been no reports of farmers being unable to get their work done because of the labor shortage.

Henderson County reports a more serious situation, due to the nearness of a camp and of an ordnance plant, as well as to proximity to the industrial center at Evansville, Indiana. Efforts are now being made to secure a CCC camp near Henderson as living quarters for seasonal workers. (WB)

The pinch of the labor shortage in Kentucky will come later this month and in September, when more help will be needed for cutting tobacco and harvesting grain. (BAE)

TENNESSEE:

At present there is no acute shortage of farm labor but there is some apprehension as to the supply for harvest. If weather conditions permit, this situation will probably take care of itself. Farmers realize what the situation will be and are making plans accordingly. (BAE)



Labor is leaving Tennessee communities with increasing rapidity as the war program expands.

Johnson County has been a bean crop center for the past four years. Every farm has a bean crop and therefore additional family labor is not available for the general labor market. Last year bean pickers were brought in by local trucks from Virginia and North Carolina. This year these workers are busy in their home States; furthermore, no Johnson County trucks are available for the haul.

To ease this situation, an FSA camp has been put in operation. Its capacity is 350 individuals. A recent survey indicates that double that capacity is needed to handle the situation. (FSA)

#### MISSISSIPPI:

Based on the experience of previous years and on all present indications, thousands of cotton pickers will have to be mobilized and directed to the Delta section of the State. It is estimated that 40,000 pickers, in addition to the local supply, will be needed during September and October. A Farm Placement Interviewer has been assigned to the Copiah Trucking Area for the purpose of recruiting cotton pickers. It is believed that a pool of surplus farm workers can be recruited in this section and transferred to the Delta Area. Wages offered at present range from 75¢ to \$1.75 per hundred pounds. (USES)

In Hinds County, the shortage is estimated to be about 2,000 pickers, and in Holmes, Humphrey, Jones, Simpson, and Yazoo Counties the figure is about 1,000 each. Jasper, Lee, Madison, and Smith Counties report an anticipated shortage of about 500.

Growers in Humphrey, Yazoo and Issaquena Counties will furnish camp sites for housing and transportation to their workers. Other counties have agreed to furnish free lunches and transportation.

The Farm Placement Service is actively engaged in registering all persons for work and accepting orders from farmers. In general, if wages are increased, as they were in 1941, and all the available labor is utilized no major difficulties are expected in the cotton harvest. (FSA)

#### ALABAMA:

Cotton growers are not anticipating much trouble securing pickers; they expect to pay \$1.00 per cwt. A shortage of labor is expected in September when the peanut harvest will conflict with the cotton picking. It is believed that farmers will first harvest the cotton. (BAE)



ARKANSAS:

The peach crop has been harvested without any labor difficulties and cotton picking will not require much labor until September. The peach growers established the important fact that setting a relatively high wage for farm operations will bring farm laborers into the labor market who are not normally interested. (BAE)

OKLAHOMA:

Reports indicate that there is plenty of labor for the broomcorn harvest. The State Committee anticipates local difficulties during the cotton and peanut harvest. A large percentage of the schools in Creek County are holding a short summer session in order to permit a recess during harvest of cotton and peanuts. This is the first year that this has been done in many of the schools. The labor surplus that was so evident in Oklahoma earlier has been whittled down by recruitment. The USES is discouraging further recruitment in the State. (BAE)

Reports from the Hanna-Indianola onion area indicate that labor for onion harvest is scarce. Hay hands are reported to be scarce in some localities where farmers are having to exchange labor. (BAE)

TEXAS:

The cotton harvest is well under way in Texas. Pickers are receiving from \$1.25 to \$1.75 in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and \$1.00 in the Coastal Bend Area. The USES reports that there were more pickers in the Lower Valley than ever before. Enough have migrated to the Coastal Bend to permit rapid harvesting of the crop there. Cotton gins are operating 24 hours a day and still cannot handle all that is picked. Heavy leaf worm infestation tended to bring a large portion of the crop to early maturity and to shorten the harvest season.

Some small cotton farmers are having difficulty in getting pickers because a constantly increasing proportion of the migrants are transported as large crews on trucks. The crew leaders prefer large farms which provide steadier work. In the past, small farms contracted with individual migrant families, but as the tires on the family cars wear out these families are joining crews and taking jobs as ordered by the crew leaders. The labor subcommittee appointed representatives of the USES, FSA, and AAA to survey the transportation facilities and to devise some method of getting help to the small farms. (BAE)

The next peak labor period, in the Texas Panhandle, will be around October first, when the grain harvest begins. (FLC)



Reports from the valley seem significant in that they show very little trouble in obtaining sufficient pickers to handle the cotton crop. True, the reports do not indicate a surplus, but coming from an area that has been predicting a serious labor shortage, it may be indicative.

The Mexican-American Labor Agreement is only three days old at this writing (August 10) but a few effects can already be observed. In most of the east and south Texas counties the wages being paid run from \$1.25 to \$2.00 per day and with the announcement of minimum wages being set by the agreement at 30¢ per hour plus transportation, this source of labor is reported not nearly as appealing as it was at first glow.

Those growers who were frankly trying to get this labor because they thought it would be cheap, can be expected to begin to find labor close to home. Dodges which may begin to appear such as charges for room and/or board taking most or all of the wages, promising one kind of housing and supplying something different, the old commissary deal of paying off in scrip, will be a big job for the USDA in seeing that the agreement is lived up to. (OI)



## MOUNTAIN REGION

There is a shortage of seasonal farm and skilled ranch labor. It is almost impossible to hire general farm hands and an increasing number of those now employed will be drawn into the army and war work. A difficult situation is being experienced this year, although no live-stock or crop losses are expected. The labor in 1942 includes a larger proportion of older and younger workers who are less experienced in farm and ranch work. This situation will be more pronounced in 1943 and will affect production throughout the region. The mobility of transient labor will be restricted by transportation difficulties. War projects will continue to draw heavily upon the farm labor supply.

Seasonal labor in beets became increasingly difficult to get as the season progressed. While there has been little or no real loss of beet acreage, should harvest difficulties cause even a relatively small loss, the effect upon 1943 planting would be serious.

Haying operations have been handicapped by a shortage of hay hands. This is especially true in the less intensive farming sections where there is no alternative pool, such as beet labor, to draw upon.

Sheep herders are said to be increasingly scarce, even with rising wages. Some lamb loss occurred this year, partly because of the inexperienced labor. There may be a shift from sheep to cattle because of the lower labor requirements. Cow hands, while available at higher wages for year-round work, are said to be scarce for roundup and short-time work. (BAE)

In the cattle country, they squawk about \$5 a day for haying wages, but considering prices of things farmers sell, they know that's not far out of line. The kind of labor complaint they still give voice to and really mean, is the one they make about industrial wages, especially when linked with strikes. (OI)

### MONTANA:

The farm labor supply continued short through July with the most serious shortage occurring in haying. An unusually heavy crop is reported this year. In Carter County considerable hay will not be put up because of the labor shortage. This probably also applies to the other wild hay areas in the State. Some difficulty with labor for sugar beet hoeing is being experienced.

Much concern is expressed over the labor situation as the grain harvest gets underway. The winter wheat harvest has started and is creating a conflict with haying in the demand for labor. All grains are tending to ripen at about the same time and this will accentuate the labor problem. (BAE)



The farm labor situation is acute. Plans are being made by extension agents in many towns for recruiting labor among towns people. A number of towns have organized crews of 50 to 100 people who have volunteered to assist farmers during peak periods. In some instances such crews are already at work in the harvest of feed crops. (ES)

Experienced help for shearing is not available and the sheep industry is in a critical condition because of lack of experienced help. (WB)

#### WYOMING:

The most serious labor shortage occurred in haying operations throughout the State, particularly in the ranching areas. This situation is being met mainly by the employment of boys and girls and farm women, though it is likely that considerable wild hay will not be cut. Lack of labor saving equipment for haying is also a handicap to haying operations in the ranch areas; and exchange of labor and equipment among the ranchers is not possible in many cases. (BAE)

A serious shortage of labor willing to do farm work is being experienced. The war projects are taking every available laborer within reach. Hay hands and milkers are most difficult to hire. Unless laborers become available for our potato and sugar-beet harvest, there is grave danger of some crop loss. (BAE)

#### COLORADO:

Family labor is making up considerable of the hired farm labor shortage. Many women are working in the fields. Concern is expressed regarding whether there will be sufficient help to harvest sugar beets and potatoes. There is talk of general dismissal of school in certain areas. This is not new in Colorado as it has been done in the past at various times. There is still a shortage of skilled livestock hands and milkers. (BAE)

#### COLORADO - UTAH:

In the beet areas of Colorado and Utah little or no loss has been experienced, yet should harvest difficulties be serious enough to cause even a relatively small loss, the effect upon 1943 planting would be disastrous. (BAE)

#### IDAHO:

A series of local shortages of farm labor will probably occur in Idaho during August and continue into the middle of September. This will occur in Gem, Payette, Canyon, and Ada Counties in southwestern Idaho primarily from competition between early fruit harvest (peaches, apricots, and pears) and the harvesting of vegetable and seed crops. This will be complicated by the harvesting of early potatoes, and the continuing harvest of grain, dry beans, and dry peas in southcentral and northwestern Idaho. These operations will draw some of their harvest



crews from the skilled and semiskilled farm workers in southwestern Idaho. The more serious situations are probable from the middle of September on, especially if unfavorable weather is experienced. Apple harvest will begin in southwestern Idaho and the late potato harvest will begin in all three of the southern Idaho agricultural areas. Complicating this will be the competition between potatoes and sugar beets in the same counties at the same time for the same labor. Weather conditions during the period September and October will play an important part in determining the severity of labor shortage. The Idaho situation may be further complicated by the existence of wage differentials in eastern Oregon and central Washington which frequently draw poorer paid workers out of Idaho at the height of the September-October peak. (BAE)

In a great many places in the State, volunteer employment service headquarters have been set up and workers are being dispatched from these centers. (WB)

Twelve FSA migratory workers camps, 10 of which were of the mobile type, were in operation in July, housing 505 families. (FSA)

#### UTAH:

The labor situation is reported serious, and getting worse; new relocation and military projects, together with the draft, are taking all adult workers. The War Board will try to get boys and girls from 12 to 16 years old to help with picking cherries, peaches, beans, and tomatoes. Canning people are requesting that schools not be reopened until October 15, as they lose women workers when school starts.

Considerable beet thinning has been done by Japanese labor, the farmers furnishing them with housing facilities. (WB)

The problem of sugar beet harvesting is causing misgivings. (BAE)

#### NEW MEXICO:

In southern New Mexico cotton areas, where one-half of the cotton picking force in the past has been made of migratory workers from outside of the State, and in Arizona where the percentage of migrant cotton workers is probably higher, uneasiness relative to the coming of such workers this year is widespread. Although cotton chopping, thus far has progressed with little actual shortage of labor, farmers are apprehensive that lack of transportation and alternative job opportunities in agriculture and industries in Texas, Oklahoma, and other neighboring States where such workers live, will cut the picking crews short.

...Only a small percentage of loss, due to shortage of pickers, could cause 1943 plantings, particularly of the more vulnerable and more needed SxP long staple cotton, to drop far below desired acreages. (BAE)

Peanut growers are preparing to use a new labor-saving method for harvesting their increased acreages of peanuts. This method, which involves piling the peanuts in windrows rather than in stacks, may result in crop spoilage if it is rained on. However, it is believed



that the risk is slight and the saving of manpower is enough to justify it.

The USES, on orders for employment at \$3.00 per day with transportation provided, was swamped with applicants for jobs in northern New Mexico in spite of the fact that a large number of workers has already been drawn from this area. (BAE)

#### ARIZONA:

With the exception of workers used in the harvest of cantaloups and hay, there is little need at the present time for seasonal workers. Year-round hands for general farm work, especially for irrigators and milkers, are getting scarce, and some operators are experiencing difficulty in getting their work done properly at the right time. (BAE)

In the cotton areas, there is a situation in which the attitudes of the majority of the producers toward 1943 production goals will be influenced by 1942 harvest experience. Only a small percentage of loss, due to shortage of pickers, could cause 1943 plantings to drop far below desired acreages. In fact, Arizona farmers, largely influenced by "scare" stories about labor shortage, have already indicated that 1943 plantings may be 30 percent less than the goal for next year. (BAE)

Five migratory labor camps (2 mobile) were in operation on July 11, housing 171 families. (FSA)

During the past 10 days there has been a large number of Oklahoma cars on the highways of New Mexico going West. It is apparent that the migration of cotton pickers from this area has not been cut off entirely by the transportation problem. (BAE)

#### NEVADA:

The general labor problems throughout the State seem to be in a state of confusion. The larger ranches in northeastern Nevada are having difficulty in securing labor. It is quite evident that the normal supply of farm labor is not available because of competition with war industries, and farmers have become very apprehensive about the final results in relation to the Food for Victory program. (WB)

Latest reports indicate that the haying is progressing better than had been expected and that transient laborers came into the State in greater numbers than had been anticipated. (BAE)



## PACIFIC REGION

The supply of farm labor has not been available in customary quantities this year, but there is no evidence that the scarcity of farm labor has caused any material loss in production. The difficulties encountered in securing an ample and experienced labor supply in 1942 may have a significant effect on the planting programs for 1943. Where reasonable alternatives are available, there may be a shift from labor intensive crops. Farmers will come close enough to a real labor shortage this year to hesitate before planting heavy labor consuming crops next year. Many of the labor intensive crops are not among the most important to the war effort, and there are areas in which a shift from specialty crops to feed crops would be advantageous.

There is need for a clear, official statement of the relative importance of the various products to the war effort, to secure maximum use of the decreasing labor supply.

A large part of the dairy industry is concentrated in the metropolitan areas where competition from war industries is keen. Even when the wage for milkers is equal or greater than the wage offered in war industries, the war industry job is more attractive. In some instances range sheep operators are shifting to cattle because specialized workers, such as herders, lambers, and shearers are hard to replace.

The greatest demand for seasonal labor is for the berry harvest. The usual source of supply, women, children, and townspeople has not been depleted. The important problem is transportation and evidence indicates that where the transportation problem has been met, the labor problem has been met. The introduction of hop picking machines in the Yakima Valley and Oregon will ease the labor situation in hops, but a sufficient number of machines have not been available to entirely eliminate the problem. Throughout the Northwest, tractor and truck drivers are scarce. (BAE)

There will no doubt be fewer workers over most of the western region for harvesting small grains, hay, dried beans, and dried peas. These shortages will be widespread but not serious. Experienced workers will be scarce and expensive and the cry of shortage will be frequent. Nevertheless, the comment that "we will get by" is heard repeatedly in private conversations with farmers growing these crops. This is especially true in Eastern Oregon, Eastern Washington, Idaho, and Nevada where farmers have developed a tradition of cooperative attitude in use of labor and equipment.

They plan to fill out harvest crews with inexperienced workers, to extend harvest over longer periods, exchange crews and equipment, and pay higher wages for those experienced workers who are the essential nucleus of the crew.

Occupational shortages of milkers, tractor and equipment operators, and sheep herders are expected to become widespread unless more positive methods for alleviating the condition are applied. The demand for milkers is expected to ease off during the fall and winter period in keeping with the seasonal decline in dairy production. Conversely, fall and winter



soil preparation will be delayed and hampered by the lack of a sufficient number of experienced operators of heavy equipment. (BAE)

#### WASHINGTON:

No serious difficulties are anticipated until the first week in September when hop picking may conflict with the ending of the fruit harvest.

Further difficulty may arise in October when the harvest of late potatoes, apples, sugar beets, dry onions, and prunes will take place. Central Washington counties most likely to experience labor difficulties are Yakima, Benton, Kittitas, Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan. (BAE)

Eight migratory workers' camps, six of them mobile, were in operation in Washington on July 11. These housed 418 families, comprising 987 individuals. (FSA)

Mr. Hardy (USES) reported that, regardless of the publicity on the agricultural situation, it is pretty well under control. In his opinion, there will be no crop loss which can be directly chargeable to labor shortage.

However, dairy hands and hay hands are very short. The dairy situation is particularly serious. The USES has a clearance order out in the Dakotas, Minnesota and Iowa on a pooled interview basis. Wage offers have almost doubled but employers are still not able to get workers. This may ultimately result in the slaughter of the herds.

The recruiting of people who are on parole from penal institutions or who will be discharged within 90 days is being considered. There are experienced milkers among them and about 90 will be available from that source. However, about 200 are needed right now, particularly in the region of Skagit County. (RLSC)

#### OREGON:

Oregon labor problems have worked out fairly well -- minimum loss of sugar beet acreage -- 350 acres abandoned because of labor shortage but this was less than last year. Four hundred fifty Japanese evacuees are working in Malheur County, 150 of these in custody of farmers. No trouble has developed; tenseness of workers and employers has disappeared. Japanese now ask to be sent to do this work; formerly couldn't get them to go. Farmers say they are most thorough workers they have ever had. (WB)

Despite the relatively small acreages and low total labor requirements in Malheur County a serious local shortage is likely during September and October. The local labor force is small, the county is isolated,



and seasonal labor requirements are overlapping. The harvesting of potatoes, dry onions, apples, prunes, fall lettuce, will conflict with the harvesting of sugar beets. The latter acreage in 1942 is double that of 1940, or a little over 12,250 acres.

Elsewhere in Oregon there is a strong probability that labor difficulty will be experienced during September and October in the Willamette Valley and adjoining counties in Southern Oregon.

The greatest demand for skilled farm labor at the present time is for hay hands and grain harvesting operations. Since the cherry, strawberry and canning pea harvest has been completed, migratory workers have shifted to other farming areas, but the demand for experienced farm help continues to be fairly strong. Farmers are still complaining that they cannot meet the wage scale level existing in war industries. (BAE)

Oregon had six migratory workers' camps, five of which were mobile on July 11. These house 874 families, comprising 1,773 individuals. (FSA)

#### CALIFORNIA:

May 1942 marks the first time that the number of employees in manufacturing has exceeded 700,000 persons in California.

By June 1942 farm wages had increased 30 to 40 percent over last year. This increase, however, was insufficient to enable farmers to compete with wages paid in the durable goods industries.

By the end of 1942 there will have been a reduction in the year 'round male farm labor force in California of 15 to 20 percent.

Current situation: The farm labor situation during the first half of 1942 was not as difficult as had been anticipated.

Some crop losses were sustained. Lack of labor at critical periods contributed to some losses of strawberries, cherries, and sugar beets. These losses, however, were due to a combination of factors. Small size of fruit and high labor costs made the harvesting of a large part of the black cherry crop uneconomic at prices offered for the fruit. Older asparagus beds having low yields were not economical to harvest at prevailing wage rates. Poor stands, woody fields, and high labor costs accounted for the ploughing up and failure to replant about 2,000 acres of sugar beets. There have been other physical losses of less importance. This is a frequent occurrence and such losses happen whenever, in the farmer's judgment, it does not pay him to harvest the crop. Low prices and high costs are the decisive factors.



Despite the marked reduction in farm labor supply, there were sufficient persons in the farm labor force to permit farm employment to increase month by month through the May-June secondary peak at rates in excess of the usual seasonal pattern. This does not imply that farmers had all the workers they wanted. They had less efficient workers and had to pay from 30 to 40 percent higher wages for them. This situation is not peculiar only to agriculture, it is characteristic of the general employment situation in our expanding war economy.

The shortage of milkers in areas adjacent to metropolitan centers and of tractor drivers continues to persist. It is generally conceded that 1942 dairy production goals will not be met in California.

Outlook for the coming harvest season: Losses of perishable fruit crops will occur unless more effective mobilization and transportation of school children, women, and others is obtained. If this is done a sufficient number of laborers appears to be available in California for harvesting fruit this summer and in the early fall.

From August on, competition among growers for harvest labor is likely to be very keen. Competition for labor will be especially keen among growers of peaches, grapes, and canning tomatoes in the Central Valley.

October is likely to be the most critical month in the Central Valley. Cotton picking will be at its peak, as will the harvesting of canning tomatoes, and sugar beets. Other crops at near peak levels in October include figs, almonds, walnuts, and grapes.

Not only will labor requirements be greatest in October, but the supply of unskilled harvest labor will be markedly diminished at that time. The vacation period will be over and children and family groups will be returning to the cities. Canneries and dry yards as well as farmers will lose a part of their labor supply during this month. Competition for the remaining adult laborers is likely to be bitter among all groups with crop losses to be expected in the fields and at processing plants unless comprehensive adjustments are made by farmers and processing plants so that available labor and transportation and processing facilities are more efficiently used. (BAE)

California had in operation 17 FSA migratory workers' camps in July, five of which were mobile. These housed 1,279 families, comprising 5,289 individuals. (FSA)



